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GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN

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CENSUS

1950

Bahrain, 3rd March, 1950.
12th Jumad al Awal, 1369

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BAHRAIN'S SECOND CENSUS

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THE 1359 (1941) CENSUS. The first General Census of Bahrain was taken on the 22nd January 1941. Previous to this there were no accurate figures about the population of Bahrain although figures were given in various books of reference showing the number of inhabitants as being as much as 200,000. The basis of these estimates, which were so wide of the mark, is not known; they were not calculated from the numbers of births and deaths because the registration of births and deaths is not yet compulsory in Bahrain, it is however a measure which the Government hopes soon to introduce.

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In 1359 the Government announced by proclamation that there was to be a counting of the people. The news was received with disapproval and suspicion by a large proportion of the community. Few people, except those who had been abroad, believed that the only reason for the census was because the Government wanted to know how many people lived in the country. Many rumours, some of them very wild, became current, especially in the villages. It was said that conscription was to be introduced, that taxation was to be imposed, that a municipality was to be set up in every village and, finally, that no women in future would be allowed to give birth to a child except in one of the Government hospitals. Some of the rumours were deliberately spread by mischief makers. Another factor which effected the census was the rationing system which allowed a larger ration of cereals to adults than to children under a certain age. Eventually after many public meetings, talks from the Bahrain Broadcasting Station, which was then in action, articles in the local paper and intensive propaganda intended to remove doubts and suspicion this first census was carried out.

659/162 The census was taken during the night of 22nd January, 1941. The figures which were obtained showed a total population of 89,970 persons; 27,835 lived in Manamah and 17,775 were in Muharraq. There were 48,267 males and 41,703 females but only 20,519 children; 74,040 persons were of Bahrain nationality; 41,944 were Sunnis and 46,354 were Shias, 15,930 were foreigners, including Europeans, Indians and Arabs from other Gulf states. The total number of houses in Bahrain was 14,482, of these 4,051 were in Manamah and 3,185 were in Muharraq. The number included both stone houses and palm branch huts. About 9,500 people claimed that they were literate, a proportion of somewhat over 10% of the total population. There was much surprise and some indignation because the census revealed a very much smaller population than most people had expected. It is probable however that a certain number of men did not register because they believed that they might be conscripted.

THE 1369 (1950) CENSUS

659 PRELIMINARY WORK: Preparations for the new Census were begun several weeks before the appointed date. The census staff consisted of about 150 clerks and officials from the various Government departments, the forms which were used were those which had been left over from the first census. The first work to be done was the numbering of all houses and occupied buildings in all the towns and villages and the division of the larger towns into sections. In addition to Manamah and Muharraq which together contain about half of the population there are about 80 villages situated mostly at the north end of Bahrain Island and along the eastern and western coasts. Many of the villages are in the centre of groups of date gardens and are not visible from a distance. With a few exceptions there are no nomad tent dwellers in Bahrain

659 which made the work of counting easier. After numbering the houses a preliminary registration of the names of the [561] occupants with details of age, sex etc., was made. The question of age was a problem as the majority of the people had no idea how old they were, often they asked the clerk to put down what he thought best. People who could read and write, however, especially children, eagerly volunteer- [961] ed information. Occupation, in the case of men, was easily answered, but in some cases husbands described the occupation of their wives as "eating and sleeping". The first investigation took some time to complete.

The particulars which were required included the person's religious sect, also the full names of both men and women. In the first census the names of women had not been recorded. In some of the Arab Sunni villages and in Muharraq, which is predominantly Arab, strong objection was taken to enquiries about the names of women, but the Shia Baharna raised no objections to this question. There was also a certain amount of organised agitation about recording sects, although in the first census nobody had objected to giving this information. Some of the young town Arabs feared that the census might show a higher proportion of Shias than of Sunnis. By dint of talks and explanations, in which His Highness took an active part, public feelings on these matters were allayed.

THE COUNTING. A Friday night when there was a full moon was fixed for the census. Shops in the towns normally close from noon time on Fridays and fishermen and men employed in cutting coral stone in the sea take a day off. In the moonlight it was easier for the counters to find their way about in the narrow lanes in some of the towns and villages and to see the numbers written in red paint on the doors of the houses. The date and time of the census was announced by proclamation some weeks before

659 and on two days before the census town criers in Manamah and Muharraq reminded the people that on Friday night from 8 p.m., until midnight they should stay indoors. Cinemas coffee shops and all public places were ordered to close, taxis were not allowed to ply for hire during the hours of the census and crews in the boats in the harbours were ordered to remain on board their vessels. The counting and checking in all the towns and villages was done by the census staff but certain foreign communities such as the Royal Air Force in Muharraq, the Bahrain Petroleum Company, the Jufair Naval Base etc., agreed to make their own arrangements for filling in the census forms.

All available police and the census staff assembled at the Government Offices in Manamah and at the Muharraq Municipal Building an hour before the work began. Clerks who were responsible for distant villages were sent off earlier in the day in Government cars and those who were counting the crews of boats in the harbour had launches allocated to them, there were about 80 sailing vessels in the port at the time of the census. A policeman in uniform was told off to accompany every counter and the remainder of the police, including the mounted section, patrolled the streets. The public gave the fullest possible cooperation and no trouble of any kind was encountered. Not a person or a vehicle was visible on the roads and streets during the four hours except the census clerks moving from door to door with their electric torches. In most houses the man of the house was expecting the visit and, although it was unnecessary, in many cases children and even women came to their doors apparently eager to be counted. Most of the counters finished their work at about midnight and returned to their bases where they handed in their books. The preliminary registration made the work of the actual census very much easier.

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RESULTS OF THE CENSUS

POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION. The number of people in Bahrain on the night of 3rd March 1950 (12th Jamad-al-Awal, 1369) was 109,650. This represents a growth in the population of about 30,000 since the first census was taken in 1941 (1359). The increase was not evenly distributed; in 1941 about 55% of the population lived in the three towns, Manamah, Muharraq and Hedd and the rest of the inhabitants of Bahrain lived in the villages. The proportion of town and country dwellers has changed, the three towns now contain 61% of the population and the villages contain 39%. (these figures do not include Awali). There are about 90 villages and many small hamlets and settlements in Bahrain.

In Manamah the census showed a population of 39,648, an increase of nearly 12,000 (43%) in nine years. The population of Muharraq and Hedd was 25,577, an increase of 4,138 (20%) over the 1941 figure. In the villages, excluding the two Rafaas, there was an increase of only 344.

From records in the Passport Office at the time of the census it appeared that about 6,000 persons, almost all of them males, who normally resided in Bahrain, were absent from the country. It can be assumed that most of these men were working with oil companies and contractors in the neighbouring states. In 1941 very few Bahrain Arabs were working abroad. The proportion of men who are employed outside Bahrain is very high.

The large increase in the population of Manamah is not due to urbanization but it is due to immigration. The village communities especially in the Shia villages are very closely knit and insular so the census clerks had no difficulty in ascertaining whether there had been

621 166 any exodus from the villages to the towns. It was found that there had been no movements from the villages to Manamah, Muharraq and Hedd. With a few exceptions the population of individual villages was the same as it was nine years ago. The only population movements which took place were among the Arab villages. In Dour, the last village on the eastern coast, which in 1941 contained 166 people only one house remained occupied; the population of Jow, a mile or two north of Dour, decreased from 427 in 1941 to 214 in 1950. Some of the people from these two places crossed to Qatar, others moved to Rafaa. The population of the two Rafaas, and Sakhir, was 2,929 in 1941, it is now over 4,000.

NATIONALITY AND RELIGION

167 Assuming that the growth of Manamah's population was mainly due to more foreigners having settled in the town, which is very evident, it might be expected that the total number of foreigners in the country would be very much larger than the number which was recorded in 1941. In 1941 there were 15,930 foreigners. In 1950 the number was [563] 18,471. The largest foreign minority were, and still are, the Persians who in 1941 numbered 7,547 but in 1950 only 6,934 persons registered themselves as Persians. This [641] figure is open to doubt. For many reasons it is advantageous for Persians to acquire Bahrain nationality, if they are Bahrain subjects they can buy land and can travel to Persia on Bahrain passports. During the last year or two the Government has refused all applications by Persians for Bahrain nationality. It is probable therefore that a number of Persians described themselves as Bahrain subjects in the hope that they would be accepted as such. As most foreigners in Bahrain carry no papers which could establish their nationality it was not possible for the census staff to verify the nationality of Persians.

563 167 Indians and Pakistanis (3,043) mostly living in Manamah, were the next largest foreign community followed by Saudi-Arabians (2,536) who included many Hasawis employed as agricultural labourers; Omanis, Muscatis and Arabs from the Trucial Coast (2,466) were mostly people who entered Bahrain in recent years seeking work; British, Americans and other Europeans numbered 1,683, this total does not include ships crews at Sitra and at Jufair (564). In Manamah and Muharraq the British and American population was 270, including R.A.F. personnel. Other nationalities included Iraqis (224), Omanis (438), Kuwaitis (149), Yemenis (105). In the population of Bahrain at the time of the census over 30 nationalities were represented.

[208] 715 Owing to local feeling Sunnis and Shias were not registered separately but sectarial distribution outside Manamah and Muharraq is sharply defined. The Shia villages contain no Sunnis and the Sunni villages contain very few Shias. Muharraq contains a small number of Shia Baharna, who are scarcely distinguishable from the Arabs and a long established community of Persian Shias. In Manamah the Shias, both Baharna and Persians, are a large and important section of the population; certain quarters of the town are inhabited almost exclusively by Baharna and some of the suburbs are occupied almost entirely by Persians.

795 162 Bahrain is predominantly Moslem. There are less than 4,000 persons belonging to other religions, of these 2,348 are Christians, not including men on ships in the harbours, 698 are Jews and 975 are Hindus.

AGE AND SEX.

162 Reliable information about ages was difficult to obtain because few of the local inhabitants knew their own ages. There is as yet no registration of births

162 and deaths in Bahrain. In the distribution of sexes males predominated, the census figure showed 58,601 males and 51,049 females. If the number of Bahrain men who are working abroad were included in this figure the proportion [167] of men would be very high. A reason for the heavy preponderance of males is that most of the people who have come to Bahrain to work during recent years did not bring their wives and families with them, this fact is particularly noticeable in the case of Indians, Hasawis, Persians and Omanis. If Indians and Europeans are deducted from the total number of males and 30% of the males are reckoned as being under 15 or over 65 years of age the total local man power available in Bahrain would be about 38,000.

OCCUPATION

162 464 Details of occupation were difficult to obtain; in most cases the replies to questions were vague, men described themselves as "labourers" which included cultivators oil field workers and labourers employed by contractors [308] and by the Government. A significant point was that nobody described himself as a diver though a few years ago half of the able bodied men in Bahrain would have given their occupation as divers. Now-a-days men dive during the season, in the summer, and have regular employment during the rest of the year. Generally it can be said that the cultivators who work in the gardens are always Shia Baharna and Hasawis. Arabs never work on the land in Bahrain, the village Baharna are also employed as fishermen, weavers, coral cutters and labourers in the oil fields. Few of them willingly take on work which keeps them away from their villages at night. The men of the Arab villages work in the oil fields and at sea. The townsfolk of Manamah, Muharraq and Hedd, who are of mixed nationalities, include merchants, shopkeepers, Government servants, mechanics and oil field workers and labourers.

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464 Fairly detailed information was obtained from a cross section of the village population numbering 31,606; this included 16,047 males and 15,554 females. In the total there were 3,960 infants aged, as far as could be ascertained, under 4 years of whom 1947 were males and 2,013 were females, 1,043 men and 115 women were literate. Occupations which were recorded were as follows:-

Cultivators	3,615
Fishermen, boatmen, coral stone cutters	1,178
Shop Keepers and traders living in villages and having shops in the towns	285
Skilled labourers, carpenters, weavers, car drivers	419
Oil Company workmen	1,508
Government employees	86
Religious teachers and readers	135
Imams of mosques	11
School teachers	9
Labourers	1,989
	9,232

The difference between the total number of males (excluding infants) and the number of males in classified employment is accounted for by the old men and boys who are either too old or too young to have regular employment.

LITERACY

212 An effort was made to ascertain the number of literates.
162 In addition to people who were educated at Government and private schools those who had learned to read and write at Quran schools were counted as literate. The first Government school was opened in 1919 and during the last twenty years the number of schools for boys and girls has steadily increased. Persons registered as literate amounted to 14,087. If Europeans and Indians were deducted from this total there remain about 10,000 literates among the local population of 106,000, approximately 10% of the indigenous population being literate. This percentage, for Bahrain, is not low.

HOUSES

362 All occupied houses were numbered and counted; in some cases a "house" consisted of one small hut, in other cases it was a building occupied by thirty or forty members and hangers-on of one family. Empty houses, of which there were none in Manamah and few in Muharraq, were not included. The number of houses in Manamah was 5,703 and in Muharraq 3,720; in the first census the numbers were 4,051 and 3,155 respectively. In nine years 1,600 new houses have been built in Manamah and 800 in Muharraq. In both towns the proportion of stone houses
[621 has increased considerably. The figures for houses in
342] the villages are less accurate, it was often difficult to determine where one dwelling, consisting of a group of huts in a compound, ended and the next dwelling began. The census showed 6,232 houses in the villages and islands as against 5,575 in 1941. Taking the whole population and the number of houses, the average number of persons occupying one house was 6½.

CONCLUSIONS

161 The most striking fact which has emerged from the second census of Bahrein is that although there has been an increase in the total population of about 20% in nine years yet this increase is confined to Manamah and Muharraq alone, the growth of the population of Manamah being twice as much as in Muharraq. Even if the number of men who are working abroad is taken into consideration the lack of increase in the rural districts discloses an unsatisfactory state of affairs in the villages which was only revealed 165 by the census. During the preliminary registration, which in the case of the villages took about a fortnight, and the night of the census, the census staff recorded 43 deaths in a village population of about 31,500 (the Arab villages were not included in this total). In one small village with a population of 248 persons there were eight deaths in ten days and in every case the deaths were of very young children, yet no epidemic existed.

464 There is no unemployment in Bahrain and the cost of living in the villages is no higher than it was a few years ago. There is no reason to suppose that the lack of increase in the rural population is due to economic causes.

744 The people in the towns and in the villages which are near the towns make more use every year of the public health facilities which are provided by the Government. Cleanliness and sanitation have improved and the anti-malaria work which the Government has carried out has done much to reduce malaria, but few women patients come to the hospitals from distant villages, although today almost all the villages are on bus routes. From what information can be obtained, without vital statistics, it would appear that infant mortality rate in the villages is extremely high. It used to be equally high in the towns but conditions in this respect in the towns have much improved.

162 Another interesting fact which emerges from the census is the comparatively small number of non-Bahrain nationals, or persons who do not wish to be regarded as Bahrain subjects, who live in the country, (18,471 out of 109,650). It was expected that the proportion of foreigners would have been very much higher.

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CENSUS STATISTICS

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Town	Census 1941 (1359-60)	Census 1950 (1369)	Increase	Percentage of Increase
Manamah	27,635	39,648	11,813	43 %
Muharraq and Hedd	21,439	25,577	4,138	19½%
Other towns and villages	39 164	40,579	1,415	3½%
Ships at anchor and Awali	1,532	3,846	2,314	150 %
Total population	89,970	109,650	19,680	22 %

DISTRIBUTION BY SEX

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Sex	Census 1941 (1359-60)	Census 1950 (1369)	Increase	Percentage of Increase
Males	48,267	58,601	10,334	21½%
Females	41,703	51,049	9,346	22½%
Total population	89,970	109,650	19,680	22 %

DISTRIBUTION BY NATIONALITIES

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Nationality	Census 1941 (1360)	Census 1950 (1369)
Bahrain subjects	74,040	91,179
Persians	7,547	6,934
Indians Anglo Indians Pakistanis Goanese	1,434	3,043
Saudi Arabs		2,826
Omanis & Muscatis		2,466
Qataris		438
Kuwaitis		149
Yemenis		108
Iraqis		224
Palestinians		28
Syrians & Lebanese		52
Egyptians		30
Others		268
Europeans:		
British		1,840
Americans		290
Others		78
	6,039	8,494
	89,970	109,650
Bahrain subjects	74,040	91,179
Foreigners	15,930	18,471

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INCREASE - BY NATIONALITIES

Nationality	Increase in 9 years.
Bahrain Subjects	17,139
Foreigners	2,541

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DISTRIBUTION BY RELIGION

Religion	Census 1941 (1360)	Percentage of popula - tion	Census 1950 (1369)	Percentage of popula tion
Mohomedans	88,998	98%	106,401	96%
Non-Mohomedans	1,672	2%	4,949	4%

DISTRIBUTION OF NON-MOHOMEDANS

Religion	Census 1941 (1360)	Census 1950 (1369)
Christians	not recorded	2,932
Jews		296
Hindus		975
Others		49
Total	1,672	4,949

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DISTRIBUTION BY TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Town or Village	Census 1941 (1360)	Percentage of population	Census 1950 (1369)	Percentage of population
Manamah, Muharraq and Hedd.	49,274	56%	68,225	61½%
Other towns and Villages	39,164	44%	40,579	38½%
Total	88,438		108,804	

CENSUS OF DWELLING HOUSES

Towns or Villages	Census 1941 (1360)	Census 1950 (1369)
Manamah	4,649	5,705
Muharraq	3,217	3,780
Hedd	719	619
Other towns and villages	5,697	6,838
Total	14,282	16,974

LITERACY

212 Census 1941 (1360) — Not recorded.

162 Census 1950 (1369) — 14,087 (literates)

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